Railway projects in Assam

498. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 2300 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 18th December 1998 and state:

(a) the survey and implementation status of various railway projects in Assam, including targets, financial outlays and achievements, as on date;

(b) the details of new railway projects proposed to be taken up or under implementation during the Ninth Five Year Plan, including Bogibeel bridge, gauge conversion work on Makum-Dangori Section, Rangiya-Mukongchelek Section, construction of Rangia Division, construction of Robs at Changsari, Bongaigaon and North Lakhimpur; and

(c) the details of damage caused to rail line in Dhemaji District of Assam by 1999 floods and its restoration status?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) The details are given in the Annexure. *[See* Appendix 188, Annexure No. 16]

Privatisation of Network of Indian Railways

499. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Railway has decided to allow private sector to run their own trains on the network of Indian Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons for introducing this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE INTHE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) (i) Private Sector participation in case of two luxury tourist trains has been allowed for running on one tourist circuit in North India and another tourist circuit in South India.

(ii) In case of Freight Services, participation of Private Capital is allowed to procure Wagons under "Own Your Wagon Scheme".

(c) The scheme has been introduced to attract private investment in the sector.